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THE
PROFESSOR'S
SECRET

By TROY ALLISON
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There was something on the professor's mind. Every young woman in the senior Greek class realized it. He had shown symptoms of it for three weeks, but this morning it had assumed the form of an undeniable fact. When the shy girl of the class got rattled and construed a present infinitive as a past participle he did not even notice it.

This same shy little Ruth Payne had assumed the proportions of a problem to Professor Claxton. The girl never gave a decent recitation, yet passed her examinations with the highest marks. He had tried not to harbor a suspicion that she resorted to unfair means on examinations, but he could think of nothing else that would solve the mystery.

The professor's mind, however, was agitated by a more complicated problem than Ruth Payne's poor recitations in Greek. He had a guilty conscience. He felt that each and every pair of feminine eyes turned upon him were searching for a sign of guilt.

He was convinced that each young woman knew there was a package of letters in his vest pocket. Of course letters are commonplace in a way and something any man might innocently possess, but these were anonymous. That was enough to make him turn crimson, but the knowledge that he had enjoyed reading these letters and moreover had actually mailed answers to the address given hung over him like a shadow. He knew there had at various times in the world's history been other anonymous letters. Really to receive them was a different matter. Ownership lends a certain definite interest.

The professor constantly remembered the first of these letters. He had walked leisurely to the postoffice after the early supper, unconscious of impending fate. The college town was a small one, and it lent variety to life to own a postoffice box and go for one's mail rather than have it sent by the college carrier.

On that memorable night he had taken his letters and looked them over listlessly until he came to the one that was the proverbial bombshell in his experience. He read it over three times before his astonished faculties were able to grasp the fact that there was a woman, an unknown woman, who professed an admiration for him. He was not quite sure that it was exactly respectable to have an unknown woman write him a letter, and his pedantic soul knew that if it did not go beyond the bounds of respectability it

at least must be called an impropriety. The first letter troubled his peace of mind for days. It was witty and bright and contained just that delicate soupçon of flattery that charms the man who believes he abominates flattery.

Had not she insinuated that she had met him occasionally and had been struck with the idea that he possessed a depth of understanding it would be interesting to fathom?

She further stated she was at that time leading so quiet and restricted a life that she was at a loss for some real intellectual interest. His mind immediately pictured the sister of the president of the college, who was spending a quiet winter in the small village for the sake of her health. Yet it seemed impossible that a woman of so much dignity and reserve could take such a step even for amusement.

After pondering over the matter several days carefully and methodically, according to his custom, he had hesitated and been lost. He had answered that letter. The address given was in a neighboring city, and he had found himself going to the postoffice afterward under the stimulus of an unusual excitement. He had really been curious to see the second one.

He had a hazy recollection of an adage that the second step in wrong doing had won renown as being less difficult than the first. He felt positive symptoms of pleasure in answering the second letter.

He knew that the dignity of his position would fall flatter than the western Roman empire if the girls in his class once got an inkling that he was a factor in an anonymous correspondence. Nevertheless he grew more absent-minded every day, and every day his curiosity increased, this pedant of thirty-five who had all his life refused to take an atom of interest in a woman.

So the girls nudged each other and giggled as much as they deemed it permissible for members of the senior class to giggle, and little, fair haired Ruth Payne read her Greek, hopelessly involving all parts of speech.

He was walking on the college campus one afternoon meditating with much satisfaction on the fact that he had at last gathered courage to beg his anonymous friend to disclose her identity and let him call the next time he went to the city. The professor was a shy man and had found it required all the nerve he possessed to make this request. He was thinking it could not be many days before he received an answer when he noticed Ruth Payne walking in front of him, poring over a book in the manner of a schoolgirl who goes up for examination the next day.

A tiny green snake ran across the path, and the professor caught the girl in his arms as she screamed and reeled toward him.

While he stood gazing helplessly at her white face other girls rushed to his assistance.

"It was an awful snake!" Ruth gasped when she opened her eyes.

After the girls had taken her to the house he picked up the Greek Syntax she had dropped in her fright.

A sealed letter, ready for mailing, dropped out. The address was plainly "Professor R. G. Claxton," and the writing was in the familiar hand of the anonymous lady.

He sat down limply on the nearest iron bench. There seemed something awry with the universe. Was it possible that this pretty child had written such letters—a little blond girl who blushed furiously and stammered every time she was spoken to in class?

He opened the letter eagerly. Its superscription gave him that privilege. He noticed, too, that the girl's name written on the fly leaf of the Greek Syntax was identical with the writing on the envelope. He read on to learn that he could call on her at the end of the college year when he passed through the city on his way home—if he still cared to meet her.

The professor went to his room, his thoughts in chaotic condition.

That night he followed her to the corner of the veranda, where she sat gazing abstractedly on the moonlit lawn.

"So I have met you," he said quietly. He sat down beside her and looked at her intently. "And—so—you—are—the—woman?" he added slowly.

She gave a frightened gasp and looked at him with terror and shame in her eyes.

"It was—awful of me, I know. It was a dreadful thing for me to do." She turned away from him, and he could see she was trembling with nervousness.

"It has given me more pleasure than anything that ever happened in my whole life," he said simply.

She gave him one quick glance and hurried into self justification.

"I have always been timid," she said in an intense whisper, "and I was so mortified when I would get nervous and fall in my recitations. The minute you asked me a question every thought seemed to leave my mind. I got more embarrassed each day. I got desperate. I determined you should know I was capable of having a thought. That wild scheme of writing you anonymous letters came, and—I wrote them. I'm—so—very—sorry." And the professor heard the sob in her voice.

He answered earnestly: "I'm glad—I shall be eternally glad—if you tell me I need never give up those letters. They have become part of my life."

The girl's eyes grew wide with emotion. He gazed at her wonderingly, trying to understand how he had failed to recognize her before. Now she seemed some one that had been in his life forever. He had been lonely, and he remembered that she herself was an or-

phan, that after the close of the term she would take up the burden of teaching.

"I—you mean that you want me to keep on writing to you?" she asked shyly.

"I mean that I want to teach you how to talk to me," he said, smiling. "I want to keep with me forever the womanly companionship of my letters."

She gasped in astonishment.

"But I thought you believed me stupid. I couldn't recite my Greek to you decently to save my life."

The professor looked into her startled eyes and laid his hand on hers.

"I don't care if you couldn't tell Greek from Chinese," he said solemnly, deriding the hobby of years.

"But don't you think me a frivolous, doll baby kind of a girl?" she questioned timidly.

He leaned over and touched her fair hair with all the reverence of a child who has never before owned a golden haired doll.

"I think you are the sweetest thing on God's earth," he said, pressing his lips to her hand.

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FACTS ABOUT ASTORIA AND ITS INDUSTRIES

Astoria today is a bustling, cosmopolitan city of 15,000 people. Its population represents almost every nationality on earth, in consequence of which it is a lively center of business activity. Its advantageous location at the mouth of the great Columbia river makes it the trade mart of the vast productive region of northwestern Oregon and southwestern Washington, and it is the supply point for fully 25,000 people. It is Oregon's second city in size and importance.

The estimate of population here given is conservative. The 1900 government census accredited the city with about 9000 people, but the launching of new enterprises, together with the natural growth, has added many hundreds to the population in the past five years. Failure to develop local resources has resulted in slow growth, but a new era of commercial activity is dawning and the prospects for the city's future are very bright.

On its magnificent location and wonderful natural advantages Astoria bases its expectations of future greatness. Situated on the only fresh-water harbor of importance in the world, with the broad ocean but 10 miles from its wharves, it enjoys marked advantages as a shipping center. The gravity route of the Columbia river is nature's highway for the great inland empire, the immense product of which must be exported from the ocean port. At Astoria the largest ships may find safe moorings, and its harbor will accommodate all the shipping that may ever come to the northwest coast. It is pre-eminently the Pacific slope port, as New York is the Atlantic port, and must soon receive from the transcontinental railroads the recognition which its advantages justify, as has New York on the Atlantic coast.

Development of the lumbering industry will alone make Astoria great. There are 75,000,000,000 feet of timber standing in the forests near the city. This vast timber supply is great enough to keep in steady operation for 20 years 100 large mills, and to afford employment during that period to 15,000 persons in the manufacturing plants, to say nothing of the army of workmen that would be employed in the forests. The first steps towards the development of lumbering have now been taken, and four mills, with a daily output exceeding 300,000 feet, are in operation. The forests are only a short distance from the city, and the cost of

bringing logs to Astoria is light, marking this a most desirable point for the manufacturer of lumber. The advantages offered by this city as a milling point are beginning to attract the attention of millmen who desire to operate economically, and before long Astoria will rank as the largest lumbering producing port on the Pacific coast.

The growth of the salmon industry will likewise prove of great benefit to Astoria. By means of artificial propagation, this magnificent business has come to stay. It will be built up, within a few years, to four times its present magnitude, and will then mean more than \$10,000,000 annually to the city. Several Alaskan salmon canneries are owned and operated here and each year bring large sums to their home office. The possibilities of Astoria as a fishing port or center in other lines of fishing industries are also of great importance, and the attention of capitalists is called to this city as a deep-sea fishing center; also to the great runs of genuine French salmon which come into the river by the hundreds of millions every year.

The lower Columbia river district, with its mild climate, offers unsurpassed inducements to dairymen, farmers and small-fruit growers. While small-fruit growing has not been extensively engaged in, those who have followed it have been most successful, and one enterprising grower is now harvesting two strawberry crops a year—the only instance of the kind known in this section of the country. Settlement of the productive lands of the county will work wonders for the city and assist materially in its up-building.

There are many other resources which will combine to bring about the future greatness of Astoria. Here are to be found opportunities for men in every walk of life—capitalists, small investors, farmer, dairymen, fruit-grower and laborer. This new country, where fortunes await the energetic, offers to those seeking location the best advantages of any section of the west.

In every respect Astoria is metropolitan. It enjoys splendid facilities of all kinds, is a pleasure-loving city and thoroughly up-to-date. Thousands of strangers visit Astoria every month, and during the summer season it is the Mecca of those who live in the interior. It has its different quarters, like the larger cities, and, best of

all, it is the healthiest spot on earth. Astoria wants more people. Its natural resources will easily support from 250,000 to 500,000 population, yet there are only 15,000 people here to reap the benefits that nature has so generously placed at their disposal. The homeseeker will find no better place to locate, and few equal places. Labor is always in demand, at the highest wages, and there is much encouragement for the man who wishes to engage in business. Strangers often remark the uniform courtesy of the people and the general effort on the part of Astorians to make matters pleasant for visitors. The home-seeker or investor who fails to visit Astoria will make a great mistake, for no other community in the Pacific northwest offers such opportunities as the lower Columbia river district.

Astoria has a \$300,000 gravity water system, a paid fire department, first-class street car service, gas and electric lighting systems, free public library, unexcelled transportation facilities, complete school system, 40 civic societies, three daily and six weekly newspapers, excellent telegraph and telephone service, three banks carrying deposits of about \$2,000,000, two express offices, first-class theaters, 14 churches, labor unions representing every branch of trade, two energetic commercial organizations, two social clubs, admirably conducted hospital, miles of manufacturing sites, plenty of fine residence and business property; is the only fresh-water seaport on the Pacific coast; is situated at the mouth of a river that drains an empire; has a harbor large enough to accommodate the combined shipping of the Pacific coast; has a trunk-line railroad connecting it with four transcontinental railroads; is the uttermost railroad extension point on the American continent; is 200 miles nearer Yokohama and other oriental ports than any other Pacific coast port; is 160 miles nearer the Cape Nome mining country than any other port on the Pacific coast; is the salmon shipping center of the world; is the center of one of the greatest possible dairy industries that the country today possesses.

It is the only place where the royal chinook salmon is packed; has substantial public and business buildings, factories and handsome residences.

Astoria's School System.
Astoria's school system is not surpassed by that of any other city of the size in the west. At present there are six large school buildings here. The schools are conveniently located in all sections of the city, and in every respect are modern in their appointments. Well-appointed schools are to be found throughout the county, and children living on farms and in villages enjoy educational advantages almost equal to those afforded city children.

Astoria's Water System.
Astoria possesses a \$300,000 gravity water system, which is not equalled in equipment by any other system in the Pacific northwest. The water works are operated by the municipal government as represented by the water commission, and constitute the city's most valuable asset. The water is brought from Bear Creek, about 10 miles distant, which has its source in the mountains.

The reservoir is situated on the plateau back of the city, where the supply is regulated. The water system of Astoria is extensive enough to supply the needs of 100,000 people, besides affording fire protection to all parts of the city.

The Lumbering Industry.
The mouth of the Columbia river has the greatest body of timber tributary and available of any point in the world. The lumbering business is the largest in the Pacific northwest; it outranks in value of product any other line. Production of wheat is a close second, being worth \$17,000,000 a year, while the value of the lumber output is \$18,000,000. Coal, gold and silver, fruit, cattle and sheep, wool and fish, all of which are produced in great abundance, fall far below, nor hardly equal in the aggregate, the wealth derived from the forests. The town, therefore, that commands the greatest resources available of fine timber must have a great outlook. Demand for timber will not decrease, but become greater with every year.

The timber trees of the forests tributary to Astoria are, in order of quality: Douglas fir, commercially known as Oregon pine; hemlock, spruce and cedar. There are also soft, or birdseye, maple, vine maple, alder, willow, cherry, willow, etc.

The fir is both red and yellow. It grows five to 14 feet in diameter, and 150 to 300 feet tall; 351 feet is said to have been measured on one fallen tree in the coast mountains. Considerable noble fir, or larch, and some white pine are found on the highest of the coast

mountains, but little near Astoria. The spruce, of the tideland species, is found only on the west slopes of the coast mountains. It attains a diameter varying from about an average of six feet to 16 or 17; and specimens 57 and 62 feet each in girth have been measured—19 to 21 feet in diameter. Hemlock occurs as a mixed or smaller growth, with fir and spruce, trees seldom being of great height, although often very large. Yet cedar is found mixed with the other timbers, the trees seldom being of greater height, although often very large. Yet cedar is not plentiful in this section. In general estimates of timber production 20,000 feet to the acre are allowed. Single acres have been known to produce ten times this amount. Quarter sections of timberland on the market are usually estimated at 2,000,000 to 8,000,000 feet each, board measure.

Mills and Manufacturing.
Although manufacturing is as yet in its infancy in Astoria, more than 4300 persons are employed in the institutions now doing business here. The salmon industry employs by far the greatest number of persons, but the seasons extend over a period of only about six months, and at other times those engaging in it follow other lines of pursuit. The lumbering industry, including box factories, barrel factories, etc., is rapidly assuming proportions, and will, within a few years, outrank the fishing interests.

Astoria wants more manufacturing concerns, and offers the very best inducements to capitalists. Here are to be found unexcelled sites, with the advantage of both rail and water connections, and the intending investor in western properties should look over the Astoria situation. Sites can be secured at very low prices.

More than \$3,000,000 is invested in manufacturing plants here, while the value of the yearly product exceeds \$5,500,000. In all, 4341 persons are employed, receiving annual wages that aggregate \$2,059,600.

Salmon Industry.
Astoria owes its existence largely to the great salmon industry of which it is the center. Year after year the Columbia river has given up its wealth of fish, and in the past 25 years has yielded \$75,000,000, nearly all of which has been placed in circulation in this city. Where other crops have failed, the salmon supply has maintained its average of production, and in this respect can be classed as one of Oregon's greatest resources.

The annual salmon yield of the Columbia river is valued at \$3,000,000. The spring fishing season lasts only about four months—from April 15 to August 25—so it means \$750,000 monthly to those interested in it and those who live at and near the seat of the industry.

The Dairying Industry.
Dairying in Clatsop county is in its infancy, and very few dairymen realize the natural advantages of this country. The climate, coupled with the productivity of the soil, makes it an ideal district for production of butter and cheese; dairymen are taking more interest in the breed and care of stock. With the genuine butter cow, such as few here have as yet, much better results may be obtained, though even now the luxurious pasturage enables the cows to furnish an abundance of rich milk, with more than an average of butter fat. A modern equipped creamery is in operation in Astoria, furnishing the farmers a ready sale for their cream, at an average price for the year of 22½ cents per pound for butter fat, and the cows yield, under good care, about 225 pounds of butter fat per year. There is general interest in increasing the dairy business; many of the dairymen are preparing to enlarge their herds, and new dairies are being started. Ever-growing grass and the best market in the world make this an inviting field for those who understand the care of cows.

All the Oregon coast country, especially that near the mouth of the Columbia river, is very similar to the great dairying sections of Europe, such as Denmark, Holland and the Channel islands. The winters, however, are milder and the summers drier.

The lands best adapted to grass-growing are the tidelands, which are river bottoms adjoining the Columbia or its branches, and overflowed by the highest tides. These lands may be reclaimed by diking, at an expense of about \$10 per acre. By diking large tracts by machinery—with steam dredges—the expense may be reduced, and more substantial dikes erected. One acre of tideland has been shown to be ample for keeping one cow the entire year. There are still in Clatsop county about 20,000 acres of tideland to be diked, much of it being easily cleared after the diking is done. This is no experiment, as many of the best dairy farms have been made on diked tideland.

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